



EU support for education in developing countries Targeting those most in need and in situations of fragility

SUMMARY *EU support for education in developing countries takes two main forms. The EU contributes to multi-donor frameworks focusing on primary education, such as the Education for All and the Global Partnership for Education programmes. In bilateral relations with developing countries, the EU delivers aid for all levels of education predominantly through the European Development Fund (EDF), funded by the Member States, as well as through the EU's two major external aid instruments, the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). In higher education, a wide range of international programmes targets students and academic staff in different geographical areas.*

In future, the EU response to global education challenges will focus more than hitherto on providing equal access to quality education in countries lagging far behind in achieving globally agreed education targets. Particular attention will be given to children in situations of fragility. As a consequence of prioritising those developing countries most off track from these targets, the EU's bilateral development grant aid to more advanced developing countries will be discontinued or phased out.

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The EU's policy of differentiation

The EU is strongly committed to contributing to the achievement by 2015 of **universal primary education (MDG2)**, the second of the eight [Millennium Development Goals](#), both through supporting global education programmes and by pursuing bilateral initiatives.

The EU is reprioritising its support, in line with the EU's **differentiated approach** to aid allocation and partnerships. This was set out in the Commission Communication [Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change](#) of October 2011 and endorsed by the [Council](#) on 14 May 2012. The EU is discontinuing or phasing out its bilateral development grant aid to more advanced developing countries, and refocusing it on developing countries most off track from targets, in order to enhance the impact and effectiveness of the aid delivered.

Building on a February 2010 Commission working document [More and Better Education in Developing Countries](#), the EU will put more emphasis on quality education at all levels. It will also focus on equal access to education, reaching out particularly to children from marginalised or vulnerable social groups, and children in conflict-affected areas or post-conflict situations.



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The EU as donor to global programmes

The 2005 [European consensus on development](#) outlined the EU institutions' and Member States' common vision of development policy, and of their cooperation for coherence and efficiency. It reaffirmed Member States' [2002 Monterrey financial commitments](#) to provide 0.56% of their gross national income (GNI) for official development assistance (ODA) by 2010, and to increase this share to 0.7% by 2015, *inter alia* in support of basic education.

Based on these commitments, the EU (27 Member States + EU) has become the [biggest ODA donor](#) to the [UNESCO global programme Education for All](#). Since the [World Education Forum](#) in Dakar in 2000, as many as 164 countries have pledged funding to this programme.

Education for All (EFA) focuses on providing quality basic education for all children, youths and adults, and has defined the following [priorities](#):

- expanding early childhood education,
- providing free and compulsory basic education for all,
- promoting learning and life skills for young people and adults,
- increasing adult literacy,
- achieving gender parity and gender equality, and
- improving the quality of education.

Since 2005, the EU has also contributed to the [Global Partnership for Education](#) (GPE) (previously [Education for All - Fast Track Initiative \(FTI\)](#)) which was launched in 2002 by the World Bank, other multilateral

agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and the G8. It is a [global compact](#) between low-income countries and donors to accelerate progress towards MDG 2. Participation in the programme requires a certain level of ownership by the recipient country. As a rule, up to [80%](#) of the programme cost is borne by that country.

The partnership is aimed at facilitating technical assistance, with a view to better aligning support to national education sector plans, assisting in mobilising funding for these plans and increasing aid effectiveness. Some [53 developing countries](#) with endorsed national plans are currently eligible for the initiative's [Global Partnership for Education Fund](#). For

its work from 2011 to 2014, Global Partnership has set a specific focus on the following four [priorities](#):

- increased support for fragile states,
- improved learning outcomes through quality education,
- increased support to girls' education, and
- reducing the number of out-of-school children.

Legal framework

Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) requires the EU and its Member States to take into account in their development policy the commitments they have approved in the context of the United Nations, i.e. to support the achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** by 2015.

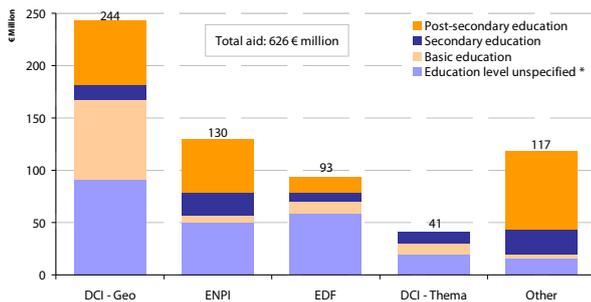
Article 209(1) TFEU provides the **legal basis** for the adoption of the external aid instruments implementing the EU's development policy.

Article 210 TFEU lays down that, in exercising their **shared competence** for development cooperation, the EU and Member States shall coordinate their policies with a view to achieving efficiency and complementarity.

The EU's own initiatives

Apart from providing ODA to global education programmes, the EU also provides aid for education through its bilateral relations with developing countries. In particular, it uses the **European Development Fund (EDF)** and the two major external-aid instruments, the **Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)** and the **European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)**. Each of them has a specific geographical scope.

Fig. 1: 2011 ODA disbursements on education by all Commission DGs, by instrument (€ million)



*Aid relating to activity that cannot be attributed solely to a single level of education.

Source: Commission Document SWD(2012) 242 final

The [European Development Fund \(EDF\)](#) covers the 79 [African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\)](#) countries and Member States' overseas territories. It addresses education under the heading "human and social development". The tenth EDF has a total budget of **€22.6 billion** for the period 2008-2013. It falls outside the EU's general budget, funded by Member States under the [Cotonou Agreement of 2000](#), but is managed by the Commission.

Encouraging results have been achieved with [MDG-Contracts](#), a long-term form of general budget support involving education and health performance indicators. These were agreed in 2008 under the tenth EDF with Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

In [Burkina Faso](#), the percentage of girls enrolled in school rose from 61.2% to 75% over three years, and the proportion of students completing primary school increased from 36.4% to 52.1%.

In [Mali](#), the EU-supported reform of the education sector has led the overall enrolment rate to rise from 64% to 81%, and the completion rate to increase from 40% to 56% in the period 2003-2009.

The EU's SAPIS project (2009-2012) in [Somalia](#) has promoted secondary-education opportunities for marginalised youth. During the 2009-2010 academic years, it resulted in a notable growth in secondary

education enrolment in the autonomous Somali regions of Somaliland and Puntland of 23% and 17%, respectively, and an increase in girls' enrolment of 35% and 18%, respectively.

The [Development Cooperation Instrument \(DCI\)](#) is governed by Regulation No 1905/2006 and has a total budget of **€16.9 billion** for the period 2007-2013. It provides support to 47 countries in [Latin America](#), [Asia and Central Asia](#), the [Gulf region](#) and [South Africa](#), which are eligible for funding under the DCI's **geographic** and **thematic** programmes.

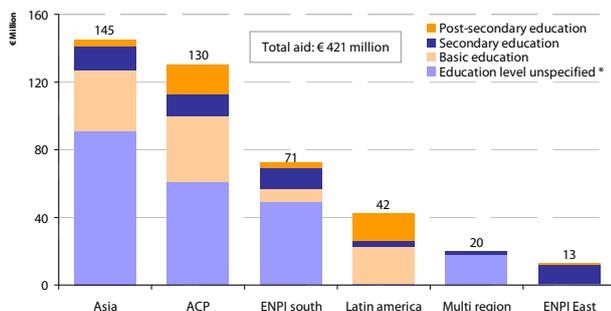
Under the DCI's **geographic programmes**, one area of activity is "human development", comprising health and education. In the field of education, priority is given to achieving quality primary education and equal access to it, and to promoting compulsory and free education as well as vocational training, higher education and life-long learning. In [Asia](#), where a net enrolment ratio above 90% has already been reached in 15 countries, EU aid helps to improve primary school completion rates as well as the quality of education. It also promotes gender equality in secondary education, particularly in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Cambodia and Indonesia. In [Bangladesh](#), EU funds are also closing gaps in primary education. In 2011, the EU continued to support the implementation of education reform in [Pakistan](#), and initiated a new programme in [Turkmenistan](#) designed to provide technical assistance for the modernisation of the education system. Teacher training is being reviewed and innovative learning and teaching methods introduced, in order to bring the education system into line with international standards.

The DCI's **thematic programmes** complement country cooperation under the geographic programmes. All developing countries, including those covered by the EDF and the ENPI are [eligible](#) for these programmes. "[Investing in people](#)"

addresses the basic needs of the poorest and least developed countries, and the most disadvantaged sections of the population in different fields of activity. Its "education, knowledge and skills" pillar focuses mainly on universal and equal access to quality primary education for children in conflict-affected areas, and for children from marginalised and vulnerable social groups. It also seeks to improve access to vocational and skills training. In order to avoid dispersing resources between too many themes, in 2011 [€33 million](#) out of a total of €45 million earmarked for the "Investing in People" programme 2011-2013 was allocated to the education pillar. This has financed efforts to achieve universal access to quality primary education by the Global Partnership for Education Fund (GPE), with a view to speeding up progress on MDG 2.

The [European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument \(ENPI\)](#) is governed by Regulation No 1638/2006 and has a total budget of **€12 billion** for the period 2007-2013. It provides funding for 17 countries in the EU's Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, including Russia. Education falls within one of its [four axes of cooperation](#). Since many ENPI countries such as Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territory and Tunisia, have reached school enrolment and completion rates of more than 90%, most of the ENPI funding focuses on higher education.

Fig. 2: 2011 ODA disbursements on education by DG DEVCO-EuropeAid only, by region (€ million)



* Aid relating to activity that cannot be attributed solely to a single level of education.

Source: Commission Document SWD(2012) 242 final

Although higher education is not included in MDG 2, the EU supports post-secondary education in developing countries through its international programmes: [Erasmus Mundus](#) is designed to foster the international mobility of students and academic staff; [Tempus](#) aims to promote the modernisation of higher education in 27 neighbouring countries; [Edulink](#) fosters higher education in ACP countries, [AlBan](#) offers high-level scholarships for Latin American students and young professionals; and [Alfa](#) supports cooperation between higher education institutions in the EU and Latin America.

Against the backdrop of the uprisings in the EU's Southern Neighbourhood, in December 2011, the European Commission provided [559 additional scholarships](#) under the Erasmus Mundus programme. These are specifically designed for young people and university staff from Arab Spring countries, with the aim of sending a clear signal of the EU's commitment to their cause.

EP activities

The financial envelope for the new DCI and ENPI is part of the ongoing negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020. The European Parliament, as co-legislator, has emphasised – and included in its [negotiating position](#) for the new DCI – the need to maintain the 20% allocation for basic education and health for developing countries, in the face of potential cuts in a general climate of austerity in Europe.

Furthermore, the EP has pushed firmly for an enhanced role for education in humanitarian aid. In its resolution of 25 October 2012, [on the EU 2011 Report on Policy Coherence for Development](#), the EP stresses that the humanitarian mind-set must be changed. The key role of education must be recognised, particularly during emergencies caused by conflicts and in post-conflict situations. It therefore deplores

that education in these situations has remained worryingly under-resourced.

In its resolution of 19 February 2009, [on a special place for children in EU external action](#), the EP recalls that children have a non-negotiable right to education and that education and vocational training are vital elements of the strategy for the gradual elimination of child labour. Furthermore it stresses that operational guidelines need to be drawn up, committing the EU to including education in every stage of its humanitarian response, in accordance with the minimum standards specified by the [Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies](#).

Stakeholders' views

The assessment of the EU's development assistance for basic education, specifically in Sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia, in a 2011 special report of the [European Court of Auditors](#), reveals mixed results which leave wide room for improvement.

Some NGOs, like [Oxfam](#), criticise EU policy for falling short of adequately translating into practice the linkage between education and the eradication of poverty. The [European Association of Adults](#) (EAEA) has joined the EP in urging the EU to keep the future DCI's financial envelope for human development at [20%](#). [AidWatch](#) deplores that against this benchmark the current DCI reached only about 12% in 2010. Moreover, it is critical that in the 2014-2020 MFF, contributions to social protection might be included in this percentage to the detriment of disbursements for education and health. It highlights in addition that the majority of EU Member States fail to meet their ODA targets. [CONCORD](#) calls on the EU to support countries seeking to eliminate school fees and to help provide conditions necessary for children to complete a full cycle of primary education. Like [Norrag](#), it strongly disapproves of the fact that education is rarely prioritised in EU humanitarian aid delivery.

UNESCO's biggest concern is that MDG 2 will be missed, as a number of developing countries are currently well off-track. Moreover some long-standing donors such as the [Netherlands](#), which seem no longer to consider education a key priority, are withdrawing from countries like Burkina Faso. It stresses that against the background of negative trends in contributions, the EU's current levels of commitment must not be reduced. Furthermore, [UNESCO](#) is critical of high sums being spent on post-secondary education for foreign students in donor countries, such as France, largely outstripping funds allocated for secondary and vocational training. These funds, it is argued, could be better spent targeting the skills deficit of disadvantaged youth in poor countries.

Main references

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